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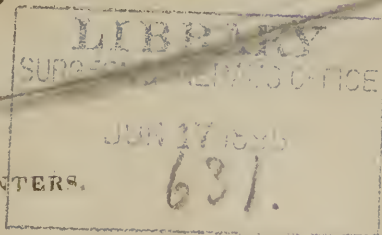
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U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Public Health Service

AN
ANSWER
TO A
LETTER
ADDRESSED TO A
REPUBLICAN MEMBER
OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE
STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS,
ON THE SUBJECT OF A PETITION FOR A NEW
INCORPORATION, TO BE ENTITLED
THE
College of Physicians.

TRUE & ROWE, PRINTERS.

1812.



AN ANSWER, &c.

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BOSTON, JAN. 20, 1812.

SIR,

YOUR letter has been duly received, in which you have endeavoured to prejudice me against the MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS. The *ostensible* reason on which you ground your opposition to the new institution is, that it will militate with the interests of the MEDICAL SOCIETY; and in reading your letter, I expected to find a complete explanation of the principles by which the latter is governed, and a series of unanswerable arguments why the former should not be granted. But to my great surprise I found you had abandoned all reasoning and argument in favour of the MEDICAL SOCIETY, and employed it as a mere stalking horse, behind which you are silly enough to imagine, you might lie concealed from your opponents, and destroy them at pleasure. From your statement, I am induced to believe, nay, it is perfectly obvious, that you have not the interest of *this Society* at heart, and that if it were not immediately under the controul of the gentlemen who manage the MEDICAL SCHOOL of HARVARD UNIVERSITY, you would exert all your unnatural, artificial and overwhelming influence to exterminate it root and branch.

The whole tenor of your letter must prove to every impartial mind, that you have an inveterate hatred to every *medical institution*, but your favourite one, connected with Harvard University; an

establishment, which, as it is at present administered, is one of the most nefarious and powerful engines in erecting a detestable aristocracy, and destroying the vital principles of republicanism. This is not only satisfactorily substantiated by the anile whinnings that have escaped you, whenever you have mentioned the MEDICAL SCHOOL of HARVARD UNIVERSITY, (for in your overweening fondness for your *darling institution*, you very unguardedly, and unfortunately lose sight of the poor MEDICAL SOCIETY;) but it is an incontestable fact that you and one of your coadjutors, were hostile and rancorous against it for a great number of years, and opposed its interests and obstructed its prosperity with a malicious inveteracy, until you had by artifice acquired an ascendancy in its councils. Had you possessed the qualities of a great mind, discretion, consciousness of integrity in your pursuits, and an honest desire of promoting the general good, you would not have attempted to deceive me by saying that you were concerned for the welfare of the MEDICAL SOCIETY, when the whole drift of your letter is to interest me in favour of the MEDICAL SCHOOL of HARVARD UNIVERSITY at the expence of the other; you would have come forward and stated your apprehension, that the *exclusive* privileges and honours, you and your family enjoy under the patronage of the UNIVERSITY at CAMBRIDGE, would suffer by the establishment of the MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

The MEDICAL SOCIETY is the Trojan horse, into whose bowels you and your coadjutors have crept, and it is in this you intend to introduce yourselves within the walls of the LEGISLATURE. I shall caution the republicans how they admit you; for who does not know the perfidy of the Greeks and the craft of Ulysses?

This artifice is alone sufficient to make me question the sincerity of your views, or the justice of your cause. But, Sir, as you may perceive, I am not unacquainted with the untenable ground you have taken, I hope in my turn to prove to you that all men have naturally equal rights, and he who attempts to deprive his fellow citizens of them, is an enemy to republicanism and a friend to aristocracy.

You ask in a contemptuous manner, who are the petitioners? what are their merits?

I answer in the first place, one of them is a gentleman, who possesses, even at this day, an extraordinarily vigorous intellect, who has, by industry in his profession, scientific research, and strength of genius, acquired a more comprehensive knowledge of the science of life, and practises with more reputation and success, than any other physician in Boston. I mean this as an unqualified assertion.† You and your coadjutors can severally witness, that there are numerous instances of patients deemed incurable, who have recovered when put under his medical care. You and your coadjutors have often suggested, contrary to truth, that he did not wish a NEW INSTITUTION, but he maintains that the MEDICAL SOCIETY never have, will, or under its present government, can be of any benefit to the community; that he left it in disgust, and that a NEW INSTITUTION is the *only* chance of ever having any improvement in the state.

In the second place another is highly celebrated for his skill in the most dangerous and difficult cases; and has a better knowledge of the properties and effects of the various remedies contained in the

Materia Medica, than any other individual in the Commonwealth. He is a man of sound judgment and deep reflection. This gentleman, however, is chargeable with two unpardonable sins, he is a *firm republican*, and an *excellent surgeon*. He has been represented by you to be an *empiric*, because he had the hardihood to perform the operation of amputation of the thigh in a way different from the established method. You must retain it in perfect recollection, when at an annual dinner of the MEDICAL SOCIETY, you listened with the greatest attention to the narrative of the gentleman, who described the manner in which the operation was performed, embellishing it with all the sarcastic and burlesque observations that green eyed envy could devise: and that at the conclusion of the story, you drank with no little asperity—" *confusion to quacks.*"

In the third place there is another, who has been opposed by you and your coadjutors, in every way the most ingenious malice could invent, because he had a superior knowledge of the various branches (particularly surgery) of his profession. You have even attempted to turn his European education to his disadvantage, and your language towards him has been similar to that employed by persons in Europe on another occasion, "*crush the wretch.*"

In the fourth place, another has obtained two Boylston Prize Questions, one of which was printed. He was, however, discouraged for some time from making it public by one of the committee, which adjudged the prize, but in consequence of the urgent demands of his friends for copies of the dissertation, it was at length published; and has since been by general consent, pronounced one of the *best* and most *useful* productions in our state. What was the reason that this work, whose merit the gentlemen of the committee had acknowledged, when

the author was unknown, met with such discouragement to prevent its publication when his name was made public? politics?

In the fifth place, another has within a twelve month successfully performed two surgical operations which have never been attempted before in in Boston, one for the *tic doloieux*, and the other the division of the saphena vein, in order to remove the varicose state of that vessel in the leg. He is the first that has performed the operation for the inguinal hernia with success in the Metropolis, for seventeen years past. Several years since, he cured a rigid elbow joint, which was pronounced incurable by those who esteemed *themselves* to be the best surgeons in the place. For which crime they have ever since, by every mean and sordid artifice, and by putting into operation all the infernal engines of an aristocratical and oppressive junto, endeavoured to exterminate him from society. He is an able and accurate anatomist. I have seen him dissect and demonstrate the brain from the base upward with great ability, which I challenge any other anatomist in Boston to do.

In the sixth place, another has prepared for the press, and will shortly appear, a work on the ORGANIC DISEASES of the HEART; translated from the French of Corvisart, a production of great merit, and is the foundation of many pamphlets on the same subject. It contains 530 pages; more than one half of the number of all the MEDICAL SOCIETY have published for thirty years. Add to this the treatise on the cholera infantum, written by another petitioner, and it will nearly equal in quantity and far exceed in quality all that you have ever produced. These will be standard works, when the ephemeral communications of your SOCIETY will have gone to the vault of all the Capulets.

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Such, Sir, are some of the petitioners for the Massachusetts College of Physicians.

I shall now proceed to make such remarks as naturally arise from reading your extraordinary letter.

Remark 1. The President of the Medical Society, together with one of its most influential members, called at the offices of two of the Republican Papers, the Friday of the week before last, and tried to influence and intimidate the Editors from allowing this question of the MEDICAL SOCIETY, and the COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS to be discussed in their respective papers ! In other words, they tried to stop up the public ear from receiving the *truth* relative to this subject. This has always been the abominable artifice of all despots. And while they were endeavoring to stop the passage to the public ear, they were then printing your letter and secretly distributing it through the legislature. This is the very quintessence of *jesuitism* !!!

Remark 2. Was not the petition for the College of Physicians, contrary to usage, called up, not by its friends and supporters, but indirectly, by a distinguished officer of the Medical Society ? All these things betray an artifice, a cunning and contrivance not used by fair intentioned men. True republicans need no artifice, they rest their cause on truth, and the plain sense of common understanding. If reason and the public good, do not mark their plans and intentions, they claim no patronage from the Legislature, or the public.

Remark 3. You say that it is objected to the Medical Society, that *they exclusively and unjustly FAVOR particular sets of men, or particular opinions.*— So they do. Many and multiform are the proofs to support this accusation. This system of *favoritism* marks and disgraces all their conduct. Since the College of Physicians has been named, they have

obsequiously bent the knee and burnt incense under the nose of several good natured republican Doctors, and blinded their eyes, and shaken their republican independence. But what cannot intrigue effect on unsuspecting men ?

Remark 4. In page 5—You boast of your publications, and these are detailed in a note, page 17. They amount to *twenty-five* communications, and three essays in TWENTY-NINE YEARS ! One of these is a *translation* not their own, from the *Edinburgh Pharmacopoeia*, and the other on vaccination, is a disgrace to the Society.

Remark 5. It is universally known throughout all New England that the Massachusetts Medical Society did not give their countenance, or approbation to the *Kine Pock* Inoculation, until one of their persecuted Members *forced* it upon them, so that they were compelled to speak out. The series of publications in the Centinel from a MEMBER of the *Massachusetts Medical Society* !! against Dr. Waterhouse, were of so gross and abusive a nature as not to be exceeded by any thing seen in this country. This gentleman was the constant theme of their abuse, and object of their persecution, merely because he introduced the *preventive to the small pox*, and because he took the lead in that business.

Remark 6. You particularize the labors of the Professors of Anatomy and Chemistry, that is your own labors and your son-in-laws, but not a word is said of the *labors of the Professor of the Theory and Practice of Physick*.—And why ?—Because you and your co-adjutors have been intriguing against him for years. You have shewn your hatred against him ever since he introduced the *discovery of the Kine Pock into America*. This is notorious throughout the State.

Remark 7. You speak with abhorrence of the *con-*

temptible insinuations of anonymous news-paper writers. Now one of the officers of that MEDICAL SOCIETY, was the writer of a scandalous and abusive piece in answer to a mere literary communication in the Palladium, against Dr. Waterhouse, and which drew forth the parable of Capt. Squirt and Son.

Remark 8. You (most unluckily for yourself) mention the disputes, divisions and animosities in Philadelphia, and say they were owing to a *rival society*. This is not true. They originated from an attempt to pull down that ornament of his profession, *Dr. Rush*. Certain Professors in conjunction with the notorious *Peter Porcupine*, exerted all their powers to destroy the fame, the character and usefulness of that eminent Physician and Professor, and this they did for two reasons; the one—because they envied his talents, and his reputation, and the other because he was a REPUBLICAN, and because he was a very particular friend of the *venerable President Adams*—whose interposing friendship at this time gave Rush an anchor which kept him from being swept away by his professional enemies, and by a British pensioned writer. These things besure created animosities, and the persecutors of Rush were frowned into silence, and Porcupine was prosecuted for defamation, and driven out of the country. These quarrels were not owing to a Rival Society; but to an envious, and persecuting spirit against a man, who from his years and his talents stood above them all; and he rose superior to all their efforts to injure him. You could not have been ignorant of these things.

Remark 9. The account of the divisions in the Medical Schools of New-York, in page 10 and 11, is a misapprehension and misrepresentation of the occurrences. The facts are there placed with their wrong ends foremost.

The curious assertion that the three publications

in New-York had better be put into ONE, is in the true spirit of the Massachusetts Medical Society, whose opinion that ONE FIRE ENGINE is better than two has become famous.

Remark 10. You say that the Med. Society have published Seven WORKS! If by their WORKS we are to know them, what an exalted opinion must we form of their sense and science? One single individual Physician has published, including natural history, more than all of them put together for the long space of thirty years.

Remark 11. The observations respecting two Societies in the same place or region are too childish to excite remark. They are dishonest; or else you are too stupidly ignorant to exercise a pen on this subject. In London there is a College of Physicians, and a Royal Medical Society, both flourishing and both harmonious. So there are at Edinburgh. In Holland there are eight flourishing Medical Schools, in a far less space of ground than is comprised in our two counties of Middlesex and Worcester; and yet they do not quarrel and fight and obstruct, but help and honor each other, and so should we—if we are wise and honest.

Remark 12. In speaking of the qualification of candidates you imprudently say this rival society would be little disposed to adopt the measures of its ANTAGONIST! ANTAGONIST!! No liberal minded man would ever use *such* a term on *such* a subject. But it is too apparent that you have no ideas, or feelings, but those of *hostility*. The advocates of the new Society never entertained any such feelings. *An honorable and amicable competition, and a generous gentlemanlike rivalry* will mark and dignify their conduct, and if an *hostile* one should be discovered in the old Society, public opinion will frown them down.

There is something extremely contemptible in the marginal remark in page 14, respecting the means to supply a *deficiency of talent*.

Remark 13. There are between 15 & 20 Lecturers on Physick and Chemistry, and on Anatomy in London, and yet there is no more breach of harmony, than if they were so many teachers of other arts and sciences. He who predicts quarrels would be the most likely to excite them. There can be no stronger proof that this opposition is from selfish and interested motives, than *the extreme solicitude and extraordinary excitement* which it has raised in the breast of one man and his family; while the arts, the intrigue and the finesse that have been resorted to, sufficiently shew that this violent opposition to the petitioners has not originated in the most liberal of principles, but in self interest.

Remark 14. So long as the New Society takes nothing from the rights and privileges of the old one, with what face can they come forward and thus svererely censure the petitioners for being put on the same ground, and in the same path of usefulness with themselves. There is a degree of arrogance in this conduct that has scarcely a parallel.

Remark 15. You boast that the MEDICAL SOCIETY is invested with sufficient powers and privileges to answer all its purposes. Why then complain? What motive have you to be alarmed at the incorporation of a NEW INSTITUTION which so far from opposing or interfering with your rights and privileges, is founded on the broad basis of the public weal; and eminently calculated to co-operate with all other Medical Associations in the diffusion of medical information, to promote the views of the sincere lovers of science, and by exciting an *honorable and ingenuous competition*, stimulate the faculty to enlarge their knowledge of the animal economy, and

diligently investigate the causes, seat and cure of diseases.

Remark 16. There are perhaps fifty medical men now in the Commonwealth, who have many valuable facts, the results of their long experience, but which will be lost to the community for want of an approved society to send them to. The conduct of the Medical Society having been such as to discourage forever their attempting to transmit their observations to an association, where there has been such gross partiality and unfeeling neglect.

Remark 17. Our most Excellent Governor has had a just view of this monopolizing spirit in the affair of the *General Hospital* ; and when it is known that our particular opponents were the very men, who were active in that indecorous affair, we cease to wonder at the Governor's pointed remarks in his speech. He saw sufficient reasons for recommending the multiplication of Societies in the following words in his address to the Legislature.

“ Many institutions of this Commonwealth which have promised great benefit to the public, would have met with much more success, had similar Corporations been established. When one only of any kind is permitted, it too frequently happens, that a majority of the individuals composing it, indulge their private views and interest, to the exclusion of men of the most enlarged, liberal, and informed minds ; and thus destroy the reputation and usefulness of the society itself. The multiplication of such institutions, has a tendency, not only to prevent this *evil*, which is an *opiate to genius*, but to produce a competition, and to promote in the highest degree the utility of such establishments.”

Thus, Sir, every impartial member of the LEGISLATURE, who may peruse your extraordinary letter, must be perfectly convinced of the necessity of a

new institution. For from your own account, it appears that the MED. SOCIETY which has for thirty years enjoyed every privilege, and claims all the talents of the state, have retarded rather than promoted Medical Science. It appears that a few of the Petitioners, whom you affect to despise, have produced as much in *quantity* (and in the opinion of the most eminent medical men superior in *quality*) as all your society put together. You complain of want of matter, when you yourselves have hindered several publications of known merit, because not produced by you or your dependants, at the same time we see many communications from this state in the Southern Journal, excluded from publication here, by your partiality.

While you boast of your improvements such is the miserable condition of medical education in our state, though directed by yourself, that your own family and every young man whose purse will allow of it, are at this day forced to visit Europe or the Southward to supply your deficiencies. While you are puffing your improvements, even your own words and actions demonstrate your inferiority.

Your very letter shews that the Medical Society has become a mere tool, totally subservient to your private interest; for this Society becomes strictly a secondary object, it is lost in the fulsome praises and childish lamentations over your Medical School. And even here you boast not of your literary improvements, but the MONEY you have expended—thus discovering the only god of your adoration; the idol at whose shrine you seemed resolved to sacrifice every principle of justice and public utility.

Your rancorous opposition both to the general and state governments around which you are now fawning, and your abuse of individuals politically opposed to you, are too notorious to escape animad-

version, even had you not first mentioned them yourself. Your treatment of the only Republican professor in your Medical School for several years is of itself sufficient proof of your insulting abuse of that power, you seem so anxious to retain.

The manner of calling up the petition without the knowledge of the petitioners, an act insulting to the legislature, unprecedented and unparliamentary, if not illegal, the secretly dispersing an anonymous pamphlet, while you attempted to hinder a *public* discussion, evinces that artifice and intrigue not resorted to by conscious integrity. Indeed, Sir, the grand argument of your letter is precisely the same used by your party in opposition to the State Bank and religious bill ; you have for years enjoyed privileges which you are conscious of having abused ; and yet you have the boldness to petition the government, which you openly insult, for an exclusive enjoyment of them. Finally, the whole of your communication is in the true spirit of that monopoly you have so long and so tyrannically exercised. Your only object is to have but one Medical School ; one Society, and one publication, of which you are to have the unqualified control. You have already under pretence of assisting your lectures for three months, appropriated to yourself and dependants for the whole year, the exclusive attendance upon the Almshouse, which was formerly enjoyed by the young physicians as the only school to improve their practice, and to give some evidence of their talents ; and had it not been for the foresight of our venerable Governor, you would have erected a General Hospital upon the ruins of that for Lunatics ; and this like every thing else would have been appropriated to your own purposes. The speech of the Governor however, and the answer of the Senate and House of Representatives have developed

your plans and pointed out the only remedy—"A
MULTIPLICATION OF LITERARY INSTITU-
TIONS."

I am respectfully, &c.

P. S. The representation in page 6, respecting the lectures given at Cambridge and the attendance at the Almshouse is a misrepresentation of facts. A true statement would cover you with confusion. We learn that such a statement is preparing for the press.

Med. Hist.

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